

Message Text

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UNCLAS CAPE TOWN 0877

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, SF

SUBJ: WHAT WILL EMERGE FROM PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH
COLORED LEADERS?

REF: CAPE TOWN 0828

SUMMARY: ON THE EVE OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S OCTOBER 20 MEETING WITH THE EXECUTIVE OF THE COLOURED PERSONS REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL, THERE HAS BEEN MUCH SPECULATION ON WHAT CONCESSIONS WILL BE MADE TO COLORED ASPIRATIONS. THE CONSENSUS IS THAT DISCUSSIONS WILL CENTER ON THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFER OF LAST YEAR OF A WHITE-COLORED CABINET COUNCIL AND THE STRENGTHENING OF THE CRC. THE QUESTION IS WHETHER HE WILL GO BEYOND THAT AND OFFER THE COLOREDS HOPE OF FURTHER GAINS. ON THIS MAY DEPEND THE FUTURE OF THIS TYPE OF CONSULTATION. PROSPECTS ARE, HOWEVER, THAT BOTH SIDES WILL WANT TO KEEP THE CHANNEL OF COMMUNICATION OPEN. END SUMMARY.

1. THERE HAS BEEN ACTIVE SPECULATION IN POLITICAL AND PRESS CIRCLES ABOUT WHAT IS LIKELY TO EMERGE FROM PRIME MINISTER VORSTER'S OCTOBER 20 MEETING WITH THE EXECUTIVE OF THE COLOURED PERSONS REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL (PARA 7 REFTEL). WHILE THE CONSENSUS SEEMS TO BE THAT DISCUSSIONS WILL CENTER ON THE PRIME MINISTER'S
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SUGGESTED CABINET COUNCIL OF WHITE AND COLORED LEADERS AND THE

STRENGTHENING OF POWERS OF THE CRC, THE QUESTION BEING ASKED IS, WILL THE PRIME MINISTER OPEN UP PROSPECTS OF GREATER POLITICAL GAINS TO THE COLOREDS IN THE FACE OF OPPOSITION FROM THE RIGHT FLANK OF HIS OWN PARTY, OR WILL HE NOT DO SO AND RISK PRECLUDING FURTHER DIALOGUE WITH THE COLORED LEADERS?

2. EVEN SINCE MINISTER BOTHA AND VAN DER MERWE SPOKE UP AT THE NATIONAL PARTY CAPE CONGRESS LAST SEPTEMBER IN BEHALF OF BETTER RACE RELATIONS (CAPE TOWN A-109) THERE HAS BEEN AN ACTIVE DISCUSSION WITHIN THE NATIONAL PARTY CIRCLES ON THE MOST ACCEPTABLE FURTHER FOR THE COLOREDS. THE PRESS HAS IDENTIFIED SOME EIGHT NATIONAL PARTY MP'S, MOSTLY FROM THE CAPE, WHO HAVE BEEN PUBLICLY IDENTIFIED WITH THIS DISCUSSION AND HAS SPECULATED THAT EITHER THE DEBATE WAS ALLOWED IF NOT ENCOURAGED BY THE PARTY HIERARCHY TO HELP DEVELOP A NEW LIBERAL COLORED POLICY (THE RATIONALE BEING THAT POSITIONS IN THE CAPE ARE MORE FLEXIBLE THAN ELSEWHERE), OR ON THE OTHER HAND THAT THE DEBATE SIMPLY REFLECTS THE DISARRAY WITHIN THE PARTY OVER ITS COLORED POLICY.

3. ONE RECENT STATEMENT WHICH HAS RECEIVED WIDE COMMENT WAS MADE AT OODTSHOORN BY J.J. ENGLEBRECHT, MP FOR ALGOA, WHO RAISED THE POINT THAT THERE WAS "MUCH TO BE SAID" FOR GIVING CITIZENSHIP TO "CERTAIN" COLOREDS, PLACING THEM ON THE COMMON VOTERS ROLL AND ALLOWING THEM FREEDOM TO CHOOSE THEIR AREA OF RESIDENCE AND SCHOOL. THE MP FOR OODTSHOORN, P. BADENHORST, RETORTED THAT THIS WOULD ROB THE COLORED COMMUNITY OF ITS LEADERS, WOULD AMOUNT TO A QUALIFIED FRANCHISE, WHICH WAS AGAINST GOVERNMENT POLICY, AND WOULD BE "BLATANT DISCRIMINATION" (SIC).

4. IN AN APPARENT EFFORT TO PUT A DAMPER ON SPECULATION THAT THE PRIME MINISTER WILL OFFER THE CRC EXECUTIVE A "NEW DEAL" FOR COLOREDS, MINISTER FOR COLOURED AFFAIRS VAN DER MERWE INFORMED THE PRESS LAST WEEK THAT THERE WOULD BE NO NEW POLITICAL DISPENSATION AND THAT THE FUTURE FOR THE COLOREDS WOULD BE STATED WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S SUGGESTIONS WHEN HE OPENED THE LAST SESSION OF THE FIRST CRC, LAST YEAR - PARALLELED DEVELOPMENT WITH WHITE-COLORED CONSULTATION (CAPE TOWN 669, NOVEMBER 8, 1974). MORE RECENTLY MINISTER OF DEFENSE BOTHA TOLD A PARTY MEETING IN THE CAPE THAT A DIRECTIVE HAD BEEN SENT TO NATIONAL PARTY MP'S WARINING THEM NOT TO TAKE A STAND IN CONFLICT WITH PARTY PRINCIPLES AS THIS UNCLASSIFIED

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ONLY CAUSED UNNECESSARY CONFUSION. BOTHA URGED HIS FELLOW PARTY MEMBERS TO AWAIT THE THERON COMMISSION REPORT, TO CONSIDER IT CAREFULLY, REACH A "BILATERAL DECISION" ON ITS RECOMMENDATIONS AND ABIDE BY THAT DECISION.

5. ALTHOUGH "PARALLELED DEVELOPMENT" AS A FRAMEWORK FOR THE PRIME MINISTER'S DISCUSSIONS WITH THE COLORED LEADERS WOULD BE INCOMPATIBLE WITH THEIR GOAL OF FULL CITIZENSHIP, THEY MAY WELL CONSIDER IT BEST

TO PRESERVE THE LINE OF COMMUNICATION THAT THE PRIME MINISTER HAS OPENED. IF WHATEVER THE PRIME MINISTER SUGGESTS ON OCTOBER 20 CAN BE MADE TO BE SEEN AS "INTERIM STEPS" WORTH CONSIDERING WHILE THE MORE DIFFICULT QUESTION OF THE ULTIMATE STATUS OF THE COLORED COMMUNITY IS BEING SETTLED, SONNY LEON AND HIS CRC EXECUTIVE COUNCIL ASSOCIATES MAY BE ABLE TO QUALIFY THE OCTOBER 20 MEETING AS WORTH THE EFFORT.

6. LEON AND CURRY, HIS LIEUTENANT, HAVE MADE IT CLEAR THAT THEY CONSIDER THE INITIATIVE TO BE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S HANDS. WHAT THEY EXPECT OF HIM, IF NOT AT THIS POINT THEN AT THE TIME THE THERON COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS ARE RELEASED, IS A CLARIFICATION OF THE GOVERNMENT'S COLORED POLICY. WHEN AND IF THAT CLARIFICATION IS MADE AND PROVIDED IT DOES NOT PERPETUATE THE PRESENT INCONSISTENCIES AND UNREALITIES SURROUNDING LAWS AND ATTITUDES AFFECTING THE COLOREDS, THEN THE COLORED POLITICAL LEADERS WILL HAVE SOMETHING PALPABLE TO WHICH THEY CAN REACT. MEANWHILE, THEY FEEL THEY MUST VOICE THEIR TOTAL OPPOSITION TO THE LEGALIZED DISCRIMINATION THAT MAKES SECOND-CLASS CITIZENS OF THEM WHILE HOPING THAT EVOLVING ATTITUDES AT HOME AND PRESSURES FROM ABROAD WILL FORCE THE GOVERNMENT TO MAKE SUBSTANTIVE CONCESSIONS TO THEIR CLAIMS.

7. IN A RECENT PRESS ARTICLE THE PROGRESSIVE REFORM PARTY MP VAN ZYL SLABBERT COMMENTED ON THE PRESENT CONDITION OF WHITE-BLACK RELATIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA. WHAT HE HAD TO SAY WAS PERTINENT TO MUCH OF WHAT IS GOING ON BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE COLORED LEADERS. SLABBERT NOTED THAT BY USHERING IN THE POLITICS OF NEGOTIATIONS, THE PRIME MINISTER HAS CREATED "HOPEFUL ENXIETY IN THE AVERAGE WHITE MAN'S BREAST AND ESCALATING EXPECTATIONS IN THE BLACK MAN'S". WHILE NOTHING SPECTACULAR HAS YET HAPPENED TO DISTURB THE RELATIONS BETWEEN WHITE PRIVILEGE AND BLACK DEMANDS, HE OBSERVED, THE PRIME MINISTER HAS INTRODUCED AN UNCLASSIFIED

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ELEMENT OF FLEXIBILITY IN AN APPARENTLY INFLEXIBLE SITUATION, FOR WHICH HE DESERVES RECOGNITION. SLABBERT CONCLUDED THAT IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, THE WILLINGNESS OF THE WHITE ELECTORATE TO ACCEPT THE CONSEQUENCES OF DEVELOPMENT INITIATED OVER THE PAST 18 MONTHS IS A VITAL INGREDIENT FOR SUCCESSFUL CO-EXISTENCE BETWEEN BLACK AND WHITE IN SOUTH AFRICA.
GAMON

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